

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-1

14 April 1987

Marines Stung Where It Hurts: Pride in Corps

J By RICHARD HALLORAN
Special to The New York Times

QUANTICO, Va., April 13 — Master Gunnery Sgt. Michael Hakim was succinct about the accusations against Marine Corps guards who served in Moscow: "It hurts."

Senior sergeants at the Marine Corps base here have been stung deeply by the charges of espionage filed against two marines, of suspected espionage charges against a third, and of charges of failing to report social contacts with Soviet women against a fourth marine.

In the wake of the charges, all 28 marines assigned to the United States Embassy in Moscow were ordered home to be questioned and reassigned, as were the six marines on duty in the consulate at Leningrad.

The State Department said today that 15 replacements had arrived in Moscow and that some of the former security detachment had left today. Pentagon officials said the trial of Sgt. Clayton Lonetree, the first marine arrested, might begin here as early as next week.

The sergeants here expressed dismay, embarrassment and anger at the accused marines, and at the press and the public for what they felt was the maligning of the Marine Corps for the reported misdeeds of a few.

In interviews today, each senior sergeant was careful to note that the charges against the marines on duty in Moscow have yet to be proved in court and that, regardless of the outcome, the marines are determined to carry out their duties.

Marines, they said, felt the sting of

the scandal more than members of a civilian organization might because of their emphasis on a proud and visible tradition.

The senior sergeants here are on the staff of the Noncommissioned Officers' School, which trains newly promoted staff sergeants with about seven years of service and new master sergeants with about 17 years of service. The senior sergeants selected for this duty are not only trainers but role models who set standards for other noncommissioned officers.

Sergeant Hakim pointed to the sense of brotherhood in the corps. "It's kind of like we were a family and my brother was hooked on drugs and blemished our family name," he said. "It hurts, but the Marine Corps will survive."

Another master gunnery sergeant, Cecil L. Turnbow, who was a guard at the Moscow embassy in 1969, said he took the blow personally. "When I first heard the news that they had problems over there," he said, "it was as if someone on your team hit you right in the gut."

Sergeant Turnbow expressed little sympathy for unmarried marines in Moscow, where several have been accused of having sexual relations with Russian women. When he arrived there as a bachelor, he said, a civilian security official pointed out an attractive Russian woman who was an employee of the embassy.

'You're Outta Here'

"He told me: 'Cecil, if I catch you so much as looking cross-eyed at that woman, you're outta here.'"

Sergeant Turnbow said a year in Moscow was not much different from the year many married marines spend on the Japanese island of Okinawa without their families. Despite the restrictions in Moscow, there were people from other embassies to meet and things to do.

"I grew up in New Mexico," he said,

"and the ballet was the furthest thing from my mind. But I went in Moscow."

Sergeant Turnbow, who serves at the Noncommissioned Officers' School and is an adviser to students, said questions about the incident had come up in discussion groups. A recurring theme, he said, was, "This is America, and whether it's one of ours or not, he's not guilty until proven guilty."

Older Marines More Aware

Master Sgt. Howard R. Wilson, another former embassy guard who also served in Lisbon, Vatican City and Dublin, said younger marines who work for him now were surprised that there might be attempts to entice marines into espionage. Older marines, he said, were more aware of the possibilities.

Sergeant Wilson also said his friends who are instructors in the nearby security-guard school were anxious to prove that what had happened in Moscow was an isolated case. "When you encounter a bad situation," he said, "marines regroup and prove everybody wrong."

Sgt. Maj. B. P. Ross, a 30-year veteran, was especially vexed by the adverse publicity. "For 211 years, we've served this country well," he said. "Now we're being maligned and battered without anyone having been convicted. For the actions of a few, we are all being condemned."

Sergeant Ross said he was particularly disturbed by a cartoon that ran last week in The Washington Times, a newspaper that has supported President Reagan's military buildup.

The cartoon, which was originally published in The Arizona Republic in Phoenix, showed a Marine admitting Russian spies to the embassy, then strolling off with a Russian woman. Its caption parodied the "Marine Hymn":

"From the halls of our own embassy, to the girls of the K.G.B., we pass our country's secrets to break the monotony. First to let them bug our offices, and to steal the codes they've seen, you had better change the guard tonight — he's a United States marine."